

REMARKS

Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided. By the present Amendment, claims 1 and 3-5 will have been amended. Claims 1, 3-5 and 29 remain pending in the application for consideration by the Examiner. Applicants have amended claim 3-5 for antecedent basis and to conform these claims to the amendment made to claim 1. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejection and allowance of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-5 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JPU 7-51066 to SHIMIZU in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,916,192 to NITA, finding that SHIMIZU teaches all of the limitations of the above claims except for (with respect to claim 1) the wall surface extending between the outer periphery of the spray nozzle and the annular, protruded wall defined by one of a tapered surface and a curved, concave surface. However, the Examiner has determined that NITA teaches a wall defined by a tapered, curved concave surface, and concludes that it would have been obvious to include this feature into the device of SHIMIZU.

As noted *supra*, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, and submits that the applied references are markedly different from the present invention as claimed. As noted *supra* and with respect to independent claim 1, the applied references fail to teach or discuss a wall surface outwardly extending from an outer periphery of the spray nozzle and defined by one of a tapered surface and a curved, concave surface; and an annular, protruded wall extending in a forward direction and at an angle different from said wall surface. Rather, as noted *supra*, the Applied

SHIMIZU and NITA references more closely resemble the prior art shown in Figs. 5-6 of the present application and thus lack at least the claimed annular, protruded wall. Thus, (as described in Applicants' Specification at, *inter alia*, page 2, lines 7-15 and as described in Applicants' previous responses, which are expressly incorporated herein), may cause liquid to be non-uniformly sprayed in various directions, due to processing or assembly errors or due to the presence of dust in the device, and may also cause some of the sprayed liquid to flow down and along the outer surface, thereby making the spraying unstable. For example, with respect to SHIMIZU, the frontmost "wall" *does not* correspond to the claimed annular, protruded wall at least because it *does not* extend in a forward (*i.e.*, distal) direction (because the "wall" is vertical, or outwardly perpendicular to the liquid supply tube) and at a different angle from the tapered portion 5b. Thus, this frontmost "wall" cannot achieve the feature of the invention which is to reflect sprayed liquid in a uniform manner.

With respect to U.S. Patent No. 6,016,800 to CENTURY (already of record), Applicants submit that this reference (as argued in Applicants' previous response) fails to teach or suggest at least a wall surface outwardly extending from an outer periphery of the spray nozzle and defined by one of a tapered surface and a curved, concave surface.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of dependent claims 3-5 and 29, since these claims are dependent from allowable independent claim 1, which is allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*, these dependent claims are also allowable for at least these reasons. Further, all dependent claims recite additional features which further define the present invention over the references of record. It is thus respectfully submitted that all rejected claims are patentably distinct from the references of record.

As noted *supra*, the amendment to existing claim 1 is merely a clarifying amendment to make the claims more easily readable and understood. Thus, the present amendment does not raise new issues that would require the Examiner to conduct another search.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submits that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the allowance of each and every pending claim in the present application.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is in proper form and that none of the references either taken together or taken alone in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention. Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and are now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. The amendments to the claims have not been made for a purpose related to patentability, but rather are clarifying amendments that are cosmetic in nature by rendering explicit what was already implied in these claims. The amendments to the claims should thus be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto. Accordingly, this amendment should not be considered a decision by Applicants to narrow the claims in any way.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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